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brew letters are written from left to right, and shaded horizontally instead of perpendicularly as in English. The Hebrew stylus was a square cornered instrument, most easily imitated in our hands by a "stub" or engrossing pen. (Spencerian, Gothic, No. 22 is excellent.) This pen should be held between the first and second fingers at an angle of 45 degrees with the hand, so as to present its widest surface to the horizontal stroke. As a general rule each letter requires two strokes for its completion, except those obviously made with one stroke, and א, כ, מ and ש, which require three.

As a general rule also, all the letters are made by beginning with the upper stroke, but it is important to note certain exceptions. If it is impossible to shade Hebrew letters correctly and rapidly in the usual manner of holding a pen, it is equally impossible to construct these exceptional letters readily and well unless we make the lower stroke first. These letters are similar to others which precede them alphabetically, and were probably constructed by a reversed mode of formation to produce distinctive features. They are ב, ג, ד, ו and ז.

The cleavage of stone, the yielding of wax or clay and the flow of ink naturally produce bold lines and sharp angles when two lines are brought together at right angles, as in the cases where the upper stroke is made first. When the lower stroke is made first the termination of the line is in the direction from which the complementary line is expected and accordingly weak and uncertain. This law is clearly illustrated in the letters ב and ג which are otherwise precisely alike. In the case of ד and ז it is to be observed that in addition to this tendency, the downward stroke when made first glides past the point of junction, an accident which would be avoided in the reversed mode of construction. The distinction between א and א is of a similar nature, the former being composed of two strokes and the latter of but one.

ו can not be perfectly formed in less than two strokes, and מ is swiftly and accurately formed only by producing a character like the right hand portion of ו and afterward adding as a third stroke a ' on the left shoulder. נ is distinguished from א as much by its being composed of two strokes instead of three, as by its foot at the base of the left line.

ס is exactly like ב with the addition of the distinctive mark, and the practised eye distinguishes it from ב quite as much by its reversed formation as by its distinctive sign.

➤GENERAL NOTES.◀

The Accentuation of the Three Poetical Books.—The questions have often been asked, Why the three (so-called) Poetical Books—Psalms, Proverbs, and Job—have a different accentuation from the twenty-one Prose Books; and again, why—if there was to be a distinction—the poetical accentuation should have been *confined* to the three books above-named, when there are other books which, if their poetical character be regarded, seem equally to claim it. There was clearly no *necessity* for any distinction at all, for we find the same portions Pss. xviii. and cv. 1-15, at one time marked with the poetical, and at another (see 2 Sam. xxii., and 1 Chron. xvi. 8-22) with the prose

accents; and in the Babylonian system of punctuation, Psalms, Proverbs, and Job were accented in the same way as the other books. We have then to do with a refinement peculiar to the Palestinian synagogues and schools,—a refinement (as it would seem) of a purely *musical* character. At least, we find the melody much more frequently interfering with the rules of the accentuation, as fixed by the logical or grammatical construction of the verse, than in the other books. The idea seems to have been to compensate for *the shortness of the verses* (which is a marked characteristic of the greater part of these books) by a finer and fuller, more artificial and impressive, melody. For the Psalms a peculiar melody was suitable enough, and it may not have been inappropriate when applied to the brief and pregnant verses of Job and Proverbs.

When and by whom this improvement in the cantillation of the synagogue was introduced, we are unable to say. By the help of the Talmud we can trace the accents to the first centuries of the Christian era; but the Talmud (Palestinian as well as Babylonian) gives no hint as to any variation in the accentuation of the several books. The *argumentum e silentio* may perhaps be allowed its weight here, particularly as Jerome also does not allude to having heard from his Jewish teacher a particular mode of reading for the three books, although he draws special attention to their other peculiarities,—metre (as it seemed to him) and stichical division in the writing. Moreover, if this accentuation had been due to an *early* tradition, we should expect to find it represented in the Babylonian system of punctuation. I venture therefore to think that it had its origin in a comparatively recent period, the *terminus a quo* being the early part of the fifth century, at which time the Palestinian Talmud had been closed, and Jerome was dead; and that *ad quem*, the close of the seventh century, when, in all probability written signs were first employed for the accents. It would not, on account of this its later origin, lose its interest for us, because it would still represent the traditional division and interpretation of the text.—*Wickes, in a Treatise on the Accentuation of the Poetical Books.*

Michaelis on Oriental Study.—"Divines, therefore, who confine their studies to the Greek Testament, and, without learning the Oriental languages, aspire to the title of Theologians, lead not only themselves into error, but those to whom they undertake to communicate instruction; and I may venture to affirm that no man is capable of understanding the New Testament, unless to an acquaintance with the Greek, he joins a knowledge of at least Hebrew, Syriac, and Rabbinic."

"Those who have neither opportunity nor abilities to acquire sufficient knowledge to investigate for themselves, must at least be in possession of so much as is requisite to profit from the learned labors of others, and to apply those treasures of Grecian and Oriental Literature, which their predecessors have presented to their hands. But a man unacquainted with the Septuagint, and the classic authors, can form no judgment of the critical remarks which have been made on the language of the Old Testament,....."

In short, he can see only with foreign eyes, and believe on the authority of others; but he can have no conviction himself, a conviction, without which no man should presume to preach the Gospel, even to a country congregation."—*Marsh's Michaelis, Vol. I. Sec. XIII.*

The above which I came upon accidentally ought to be impressed upon every student who desires a dispensation from Hebrew.

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